



"I've got my hand up the skirt of Mother Nature  
I've got my foot in the door of Liberty  
I've got my head stuck in the railings of Reason  
Thank God for the banjo on my knee..."

-- Neil Innes

I can hear your startled gasps from here. Still can't believe it, can you : two issues of Harry Bell's fanzine in one year? It just goes to prove that all is never quite what you expect it to be, and the unlikeliest things can happen. In the last issue I suggested that, in all probability, this second issue of TOCSIN would show some differences from the first issue. Never let it be said that Harry Bell doesn't live up to his promises -- the biggest change this issue is that the masthead once again carries only my name. TOCSIN is no longer edited by Harry and Irene Bell; but then life at No.9 is no longer edited by Harry and Irene Bell. Irene has chosen to go to live in the shadow of a brick-works further north, and I have been taught the lesson that, in common with the big world outside, fandom has its quota of sharp knife artists waiting for a half-turned back. Choose your friends wisely, fans.

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Judging by television coverage, most of the country joined the cheering multitudes in the capital in having a high old time on the Queen's Jubilee Weekend. It sometimes seems to me that I live in a different country from that depicted on television. In particular, the execrable "Nationwide" portrays a country of people totally caught up in Mike Barrett's and Frank Bough's interminable searches for Nurse of the Year, Cook of the Jubilee, Wimp of the Century and their Name the Nationwide Racehorse Competition ( I thought about fulfilling a years-old ambition and suggesting they name it "Six-to-Four" just to give the commentating clods something to tie their tongues up in when it came to reading out the odds, but what the hell do I care anyway? ). I find it difficult to believe that anyone other than Barrett & Bough is actually interested in their anaemic programme but I suppose some clever buggers earning fat salaries in Market Research have sussed out the whole thing and convinced the Big Men at the BBC that what the proles want is Nurses-of-the-Year and Name-the-Nationwide-Orang-Outan Competitions. Bloody hell! I don't suppose it's just me out of step, is it? Don't tell me Pat Charnock sat on the edge of her seat, chewing her nails, saving Graham's for later, desperately hoping Nurse Rita Terrible would be voted Racehorse of the Year. Don't tell me Mike Meara glued himself to the tv while following the Richard Stilgoe Barber-Shop Quartet singing the Build-Yourself-an-Abattoir Manual. Don't tell me! Don't tell me! Roy Kettle? Well, yes, but I'd believe anything of him.

Whatever the rest of Her Majesty's subjects may have been up to on Jubilee Day, I was not celebrating. To be sure, a spotty individual in half-mast trousers and an overcoat two sizes too big for him did call at the house and ask if I'd like to contribute to the street party. There are some people in this world who, with a flashing smile and a winning line in patter, will have the rest of the world giving them money in seconds. This man was not one of them. The shadow of unemployment hung over him like Pigpen's dust-cloud, and come to think of it, Pigpen's dust-cloud hung over him, too. Trusting creature that I am, even I could see that giving money to this disaster would be akin to subscribing to John Piggott's next fanzine. I told him I'd be away that weekend, but others further up the street were more gullible and in the weeks leading up to the Great Event I saw him on his collecting rounds, every Friday evening, regular as clockwork. Just before the pubs opened.

I hadn't lied when I told him I'd be away on Jubilee Day but subsequent events were such that I did, in fact, spend the day at home. Rob Jackson was able to arrange for a group of Gannets, myself included, to go with him on the Friday to his parents' cottage, a place I've written about before. The weather was lousy and the visit to the cottage unexceptional: we drank the hours away in the pub, played countless games of darts, enjoyed ourselves, but that's all there is to be said. Because Rob was on call at the hospital we had to drive home on the Monday morning and that, of course, left Jubilee Tuesday an empty space on the Bell calendar.

To my considerable surprise, I woke early on the Tuesday, a cold, sick grey light prising my eyelids open. As I dressed I watched the rain spatter on the



window; as I ate breakfast I saw the rain stop and listened instead to fitful gusts of wind flap and crack the three strings of Union Flags which had been strung across the street while I was flinging boozy darts at a Cumbrian dart-board. It was that kind of morning. Indeed, it turned into that kind of day : weather changeable; over-cast with scattered showers occasional bright periods. During one of these ( not very bright ) periods some of the local jobs made a great deal of noise over carrying up the street one or two wooden trestles. Rain stopped play. A little later the street fairly crackled with energy and boyish laughter as four twerps with no coats on staggered up the middle of the road with two wooden tables. A high wind of excitement raced up and down each side of the street, shaking windows and rattling letterboxes. Come out! Come on out! it seemed to say. Something is about to happen! It did: the heavens shook out the first of several downpours they'd been holding in reserve.

The atmosphere at No. 9 was one of intense gloom and despondency. The rotten weather and recent domestic events had brought on a fit of acute melancholia, a condition to which I am no stranger. I drifted round the house picking things up, putting them down, pulling things out from the bottom of boxes and throwing them in the bin or on the fire, in the certain knowledge that one day I would spend valuable time turning the house upside down looking for the things. In my element, I was having a great time.

Apparently, our Jubilee collector had saved some of the funds from the hands of the barman at the Nursery House Social Club (CIU Affiliated). Under a sky of palest grey the revelry commenced. Those who had contributed to the Baccanale, and probably half a dozen more who had not, clustered round the bare boards of the trestled tables, wolfing down sandwiches as fast as their wind-stiffened fingers could pick them up. Within what seemed like minutes the empty plates lay like miniature lunar craters round the still steaming LEM of the communal teapot.

Sporadic conversations broke out; one or two children growing bored with the whole affair in general and their new hula-hoops in particular, took to hitting each other over the head with them. It was a British idyll, no doubt about it.

I took a last lowering look round the doorway at the festivities, then tromped into the kitchen to start in on the last can of Heineken. It failed to reach the parts the Brown Ale and vodka also couldn't reach.

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Although the whole of 1977 has been designated as Jubilee Year, it's becoming obvious to me that in creating one official day of celebration, a day on which poor weather was prevalent, the Government pulled the fuse on what could have been a really memorable year. Perhaps we should have followed the American example and had two years of riotous fun and frivolity; by the end of that time we'd all be glad to get back to austerity and the good people of the U.S. would be just as bored with the Jubilee as we were with the Bicentenary.

The mention of austerity reminds me that frequent parallels have been drawn with the Festival of Britain, the "Tonic to the Nation" of the Fifties. But nowhere in the newspaper articles about red, white and blue sausages, houses and people was there the true spark of originality exemplified in this piece by Michael Frayn about the Festival of Britain (culled from "The Decorative Arts of the Forties and Fifties : Austerity/Binge" by Bevis Hillier):- "A certain melancholy British whimsy crept in elsewhere uninvited. The Ministry of Pensions asked that room should be found for a modest display of artificial limbs. A Midlands firm wondered if space could be found for some shrouds and coffin fittings. Another manufacturer sought permission to exhibit a model of the South Bank made out of toilet rolls."

Great stuff, eh? Something which occurred to me recently is that as recorded human history advances, as the list of famous and infamous men and women being born and dying lengthens, as more and more momentous events happen, the more occasions there will be for celebration. Even as the Queen celebrated her Silver Jubilee, others in the country were cheering for the Durham Road Baptist Church Centenary and Newcastle Brown Ale's Golden Jubilee. Talking it over with Kevin Williams the other day, we came upon the intriguing possibility that there may be one day in the entire calendar when nothing ever happened. Just think, if we could find it we could celebrate it!

.....:)(X)(X):.....

The last time I remember having a conversation of any length, if not of any depth, with Chris Priest was at the 1967 Eastercon in Bristol, when he and I and Graham Charnock sat on the floor of someone's room party talking, among other things, about professional cartooning. I was later found, as Bryn Fortey constantly reminds me, slumped in a corridor amid the debris of my camera and flash-gun, a pool of vomit eating away the hotel carpet. The camera and flash-gun are, in fact, intact to this day, but Bryn, being an elderly gentleman, likes to embroider his stories with picturesque, if untrue, details, and who am I to spoil an old man's fading pleasures?

But I digress. When I returned to convention fandom in 1973 I was pleased to find Chris there too. "Hello Chris," I said. "Hello Harry," said Chris. We had both been to Repartee Classes. Every time we passed one another, stood next to one another at the bar or in the stalls, we held the same conversation: "Hello Harry." "Hello Chris." You can see why Chris is the success he is today.

Anyway, it's been going on ever since, at every opportunity at every convention Chris and I have been hello-harrying and hello-chrissing, evidently in the sure knowledge that nothing more need be said for full understanding between us. And now Chris tells me he is giving up conventions; they depress him, he says. What the hell am I going to do? Here I am with this smoothly functioning line in fanish pleasantries and the only person to respond automatically with the correct ritualistic greeting will no longer be there. Should you see me wandering hotel corridors at any time, muttering to myself, it'll just be surplus hello-chrisses I'm getting rid of. Anyone want the vacant post of trainee hello-harryer?

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I began this fanzine in the warm rain months of early summer and because I felt I needed time to sort myself out, I resolved that TOCSIN-2 would take up all my energies by becoming a big, expensive production, a showcase for some of my more gimmicky, not to say idiotic, ideas. Summer washed over me and somehow I got myself sorted out sooner than I'd expected. The fanzine languished in the attic but wouldn't let me forget it. I didn't want to forget it really, I just didn't want to put all the effort into it I'd originally planned to put into it. I put Fripp & Eno's "No Pussyfooting" on the stereo and stared out of the window. In a dream Roy Kettle came to me and said "You're not cut out for this genzine business, Harry," and fell off his chair. He was pissed.

It wasn't until the cold fogs of October wrapped themselves round No.9 that the solution came to me. I was staring out of the window at the time, Fripp & Eno droning rhythmically in the background, and the answer was dead easy really. I still wanted to pub my ish, but didn't want to become a victim of the Bigger and Better Syndrome. OK, so I drop the TOCSIN title, keep the editorial title KAMIKAZE as the fanzine title and finish up with the format you have in your hands (or are poking gingerly with a forked stick) -- some pages by fun-loving, jolly but sometimes grumpy Harry Bell, one article and a lettercol. That seems like a fanzine I can handle without too much of a strain on Time, Patience and Wallet. I trust it is to your liking. It's all you're gonna get, anyway.

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It amazes me how some scraps of paper cling over the years. They refuse to be brushed away. Miraculously survive frequent clear-outs dictated by changing interests. Have a knack of sliding out of folders and envelopes to rot quietly undisturbed in the inaccessible corners of storage space.

I had a cruel clear-out when I gaffiated in the late fifties. Really drastic. I gave away a fanzine collection spanning the fannish generations back to the mid-thirties. I burned the accumulated fannish correspondence of years. I disposed of an sf mag collection with pulps that I'd acquired back in those distant days when unsold copies were shipped over to Britain as ballast, and ended up on the market barrows in Manchester - and you could buy 'em for a mere 3d each (only  $\frac{1}{4}$  of today's inflated pence). And not unnaturally, since resuming contact with fandom in the last few years, there are moments when I deeply regret that action.

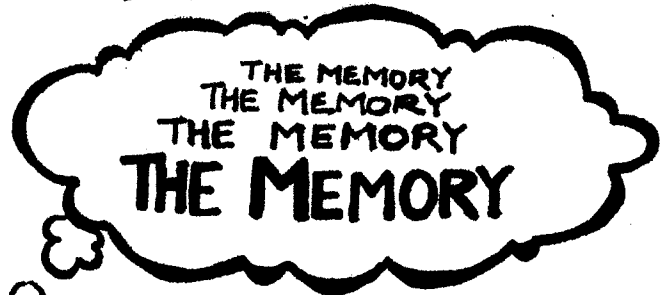
Fortunately I keep finding relics that escaped. Cuttings, odd pages from letters, snapshots, notes... preserved in a moment of enthusiasm and then lost and forgotten. Now they turn up, unexpectedly relevant.

Like this article by Charles Burbee, an American-fan-to-be-reckoned-with in the forties, on How to stop writing for fanzines. The original has long since disappeared: the paper I hold in my hand is just a copy, and handwritten at that. There's no note of a date but since it is in a faintly laboured italic script, I judge it to have been done in the days when I first started to practise calligraphy - which puts it back more than twenty years. The article appeared in Bill Rotsler's FAPazine Masque, and it still impresses me. I pass on two irresistible quotes:

"It breaks over you eventually - the realisation that you are wasting too much damned time writing for fanzines..."



# SHAKES



a column by  
**HARRY TURNER**

"... So after a while your brain will no longer turn out fannish ideas for articles and you are comparatively safe, unless you know somebody like Willie Rotsler who is such a fine fellow withal that it is difficult to refuse him when he asks for material. But you buckle down and say, the hell with you Willie, don't you know I've stopped writing for fanzines? And so, by God, you write an article for Masque to show that you can stop writing fanzine articles any time you choose."

Yeah. I know that feeling.

. . . . .  
I'm looking at two snapshots. Age has imbued them with a faint tinge of sepia. On one, smirking self-consciously beside Eric Needham and George Ellis, stands my 17-year old self.

The three of us, as representatives of Manchester fandom, had travelled to Leeds one fine day in 1938. And there we were, at the clubroom - headquarters of the recently-formed Science-Fiction Association - meeting the leading lights of Leeds fandom. The event is too far behind me now to be more than a blurred memory of faces and figures, of climbing flights of stairs to an above-shop room, walls covered with a profusion of paintings and photographs, shelves packed with hardback books and pulp mags, of sitting in a creaky cane chair... But I still remember the thrill of making personal contact with other fans, the enthusiasm, the excited chat and argument, a deep sense of fulfilment.

Even then Leeds was a long-established meeting place for sf fans. Back in 1935 the first British Chapter of the Wonder Stories-inspired Science Fiction League had been formed there, and in the year before our visit the first ever British national fan convention had been held in Leeds. That was when the SFA came into being. Yet the glory was soon to fade. A few weeks hence a second convention was planned to take place in London, and the SFA seat of power was destined to drift away from the provinces.

But on this warm Saturday afternoon, aware only of the present, we all trooped down into the yard at the back of the clubhouse, and posed in the spring sunshine. And on my second souvenir of that long-lost day in 1938 a happy group smiles at the camera. Eric and Gorge sit at the front, while I hover with our hosts: Vic Gillard, Doug Mayer, Harry Warnes and Doug Airey.

There's a face missing - Albert Griffiths, one of the mainstays of Leeds fandom at that time. But I guess someone had to hold the camera.

. . . . .  
Thinking back, 1938 seems to have been a key year in my early fannish career. After Leeds I went down to that London convention, a gathering held in a hall owned by the Ancient Order of Druids. (It had an inner sanctum with concealed lighting and impressive papier-mache Stonehenge decor).



about 50 fans attended (we were very much a minority group there) and it was my first chance to meet the London fans: Wally Gillings (editing Tales of Wonder), Bill Temple, Ted Carnell, Eric Williams, Ken Chapman, Frank Arnold among them. Professor A.M.Low was guest or chairman or something equally important: he was a good front-man at the time, being "one of the most vigorous personalities in modern Science". Or so he described himself at the head of his regular column in Armchair Science, which he happened to edit. A dedicated self-publicist, indefatigable populariser of popular science, and author of a few abysmal sf stories and serials. My only other memory of the official programme is that I.O.Evans was demonstrating his extensive knowledge of all sf written prior to 1938, and Wally Gillings filled us in on his never-ending struggle with publishers to open up the sf market.

I spent a lot of time arguing with Benson Herbert (who recently surfaced in a TV documentary as a psychic investigator) and a fellow-artist from Leeds (whose name eludes me) about surrealism, still a way-out and controversial art form then. And investigating the resources of the SFA book lending library, a seeming vast collection in the days when you had to search out your science fiction.

This con was also the AGM of the SFA and the influx of members from the provinces to live in the Big City enabled the London Branch to vote away the power from Leeds and establish London as HQ. Two of those members were Arthur Clarke, from Taunton, and Maurice Hanson, who left a thriving sf group in Nuneaton (one of the earliest British centres of fanac).

I returned home in a euphoric state, rounded up the local fans and formed a Manchester SFA branch.

I have a couple of sheets of official notepaper, brown with age, held together with a rusty paperclip, from the Executive Headquarters & Council Offices of the Science-Fiction Association. (An expert would detect Arthur Clarke's fingerprints on them somewhere.) The letter is dated 22 May 1938 and addressed "To our Friends of the new Manchester Branch"...

It was brought up by Arthur and Maurice for the official opening of the branch in the attic clubroom at my home. A very select gathering, only eight or nine of us. Arthur complimented my mother on the meal she dished up, and she never ceased to remind me of that fact, years after, every time Arthur was mentioned on radio or TV.

I think it's worth quoting something of the letter to try and recreate the dedicated spirit of those days:

'... Whilst we send this message by the hand of two Officials from the Association's Headquarters, we wish to initially take the opportunity of expressing our disappointment that we cannot all be with you...



We would be serving no useful purpose here if we were to discuss the merits of our favourite form of literature, or the enjoyment derived from the perusal of it, but we do think that you will find, now you have an Association Branch in your fair City, that your science-fiction will mean a lot more to you. You will no longer be an individual who reads a queer kind of magazine and has strange notions and ideas, alien to the ordinary layman. No, now you will be in the company of others with coincidental tastes and who think along similar lines to you, yourself.

You will no longer have to sit down to write a lengthy letter and await an answer if you wish to make contact with others of your own particular zest and perception - you will find these people at your local Branch.

There you will read, discuss, debate and, mayhap, write science-fiction, you will imbibe fantasy and go away from your meetings with a feeling of satisfaction that it is impossible to obtain other than by direct contact with persons with sympathetic apprehension of your ideas. You will, as we said above, enjoy your science-fiction more.

We say, with all due pride, that you could not belong to any more dignified or distinguished Association connected with science-fiction, were you to go to the utmost ends of this little speck of cosmic dust we call, Earth. It will place before you and at your disposal the entire extent of its organisation. It will be yours to take advantage of the advantages, services and benefits offered - all that will be much easier now you are members of a Branch.

Our delegates will discuss with your good Chairman a scheme whereby you can take advantage of the Association Lending Library at vastly reduced rates... that, straightaway is an instance of the extra benefits a Branch brings, and can alone bring, to its members. There are, you will quickly discover, many other attendant boons.

We are already aware that you have a distinguished and enthusiastic group of members, and you should have no difficulty in making your Branch a phenomenal success. It is to that phenomenal, and, we sincerely trust, early success, that this message is dedicated, together with the felicitations and good wishes of:

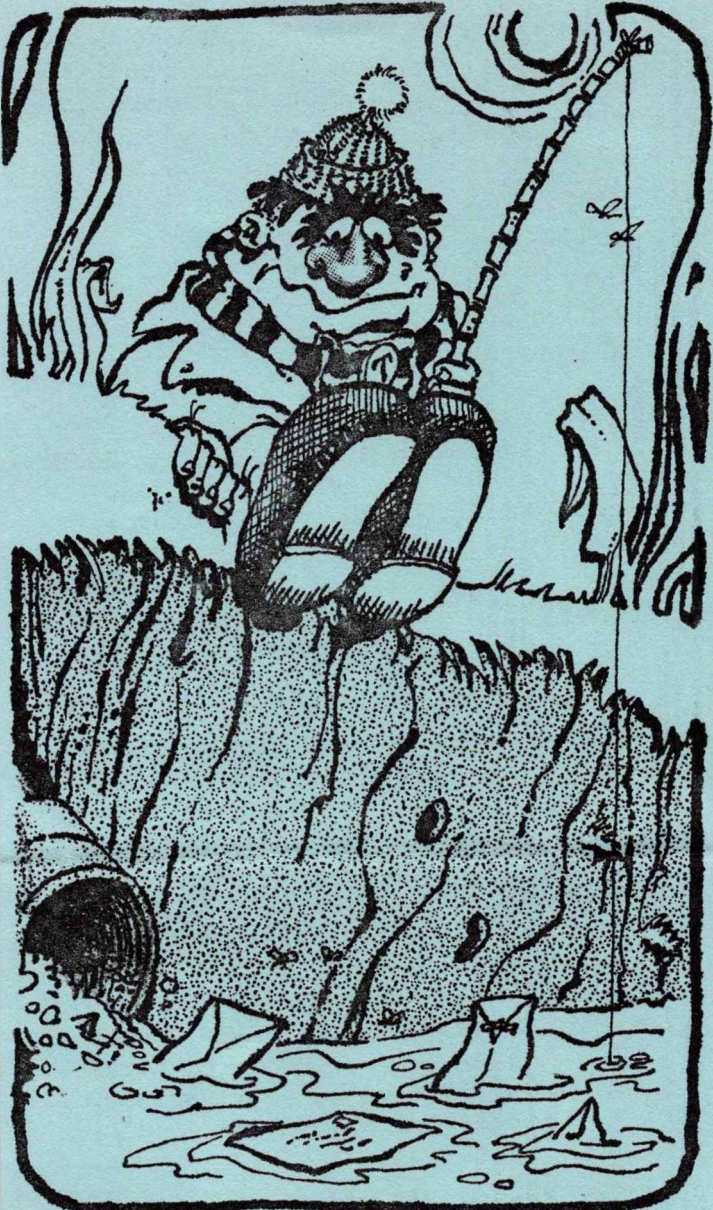
M. KENNETH CHAPMAN, Central Exec. Secretary & Chairman of the SFA Council  
EDWARD J. CARNELL, Honorary Treasurer  
MAURICE K. HANSON, Editor of Novae Terrae, etc.  
ERIC C. WILLIAMS, Asst. Exec. Secretary & Librarian  
SIDNEY L. BIRCHBY, Asst. Exec. Secretary  
ARTHUR C. CLARKE, Associate Editor of Novae Terrae  
WALTER H. GILLINGS  
WILLIAM F. TEMPLE  
JOHN C.H. DRUMMOND Etc., Etc., Etc. "

My ultimate reaction to that was inevitable, I suppose.

Far broke out, the SFA folded. And such is fan's ingratitude to fan, that when efforts were made a year or so later to impose another organisation on fandom, I found myself ganging up with Doug Webster in a fanarchist revolt against the organisation men. We lost out, of course, but that's another story.



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Noting John Barfoot's loc, I must express surprise that the more distinguished pieces of American cinema are making it over to your country. As is well known, our best work is usually hard for common foreigners to appreciate, and our most profitable export is usually works by such journeymen hacks as Altman, Copola; sensationalistic drivel like CITIZEN KANE and BIRTH OF A NATION (I remember the sound track being very technically deficient on that last one). So I'm glad that TRUCK STOP WOMEN is gracing British screens; and I hope that in time, some of our better work will find an audience in London. Some of our stuff like INVASION OF THE BEE GIRLS and STUFF may be a bit deep for you, but noting the reception of DEEP THROAT on its tv showing by Thames Television, I have high hopes. ((Eh?))

I suppose this sort of thing goes both ways. We have trouble getting your best work too. There are nine television stations in my area, and I keep on imploring them to take some of the CARRY ON films, but none of them, not even the non-commercial one, will do anything. All I get is this damned Olivier tripe.

I got into fandom by proselytising, and despite what Mike Glicksohn and

**TOXIC  
Waste**



Darroll Pardoe say, I have no complaints. I can remember it clearly: I was walking down Michigan Menue in Chicago and this couple, their names were Alex and Phyllis, they walked up to me and tried to sell me incense and Spock ears. I was about to say no and walk back to the train station when I just looked into their eyes by chance, and the love and camaraderie I saw was overwhelming. We talked a while, and then they took me over to this old officebuilding, to this room which said ADVENT:BOOKS on it. There, I went through my first initiation, where I had to take the wheels off Courtney's boat, and saw through it. I'm not supposed to tell about that part under pain of gafiation, but my deprogrammer says it's okay now.

Starting with the idea of an sf film novelization without special effects, the first thing I think of is C.S.Lewis's THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH. It's more of a fantasy than sf, but is part of a trilogy which decidedly speculative, and it's the only book of the three that would film successfully. Dick's THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE is another natural in this category; it wouldn't even require elaborate sets, except for the High Castle exterior itself. Aimov's FOUNDATION books would make a good serial a la the BBC, with little difficulty. I'm working on a new radio version of his NIGHTFALL, and from picking that story apart, you could stage it very easily, as a one-acter.

We were talking about trashy movies a while back, and I've just seen one in the middle of writing this letter. It was a film mde for tv called SPECTRE, and it's produced and co-written by guess-who, Gene Roddenberry. The script's been around for years (I think it was rewritten for this production), and he's sold copies to Star Trek fans through his companies, but he finally managed to get a studio and a tv network interested, and it's running as a pilot for a series about a team of criminal psychologists (Robert Culp and Eg Young) who solve satanically maneuvered crimes. It sounds pretty silly when compressed into one line. It is pretty silly at that, and I wager that this first film is beter written and better directed (Clive Donner directed, with a good deal of needed style) than the average series episode would be. He also filmed the thing in your country, where everything is supposed to be cheaper, in spite of legends of union troubles. If you think film unions in your country are hard to work with, don't go to Hollywood.

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Middx.

Rob Hansen's remarks on the filming of sf makes me wonder why anyone would want their favourite novels turned into movies. The enjoyment of a good book is a private thing and transferring it to a mass media is akin to mental rape; maybe the authors concerned feel

differently - look what de Mille did for Exodus; a pretty good PR job for Moses! What Rob doesn't realise is that the setting-up of a movie stems from a scenario not a novel, based on the available actors, technical facilities, budget, and locations with an eye on current commercial trends. The product's artistic or financial success owes very little to the novel on which it is based unless it is a token filmization of a best-seller. The much criticized Soylent Green (well, fans didn't seem to like it because it didn't follow the book) was, I thought, a highly effective thriller (despite the miscasting of Heston who looked as if he was still taking the tablets) because it built up to a confrontation/revelation climax that was both lacking and unnecessary in the novel. Conversely, Slaughterhouse-Five was a failure because it followed

Vonnegut too closely with a cumbersome, non-cinematic form of narrative, Ballard, with his visual imagery and landscape/inner-space analogies, is an exception and his recent novels cry out to be filmed with the minimum of re-writing.

I liked Kevin Williams' description of Ian Maule looking like a "toasting-fork with glasses." Quite true, sorry to relate that since Ian came to the Smoke he is but a shadow of his former self. A condition possibly exacerbated by the nature of his occupation which involves confiscating and consuming vast quantities of alcohol and nicotine to protect the nation's physical health and "reading" hard-core porn to safeguard our spiritual purity. He can barely raise his haggard face to bar-level these days to croak, apologetically: At least I'm younger than Harry Bell!"

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Kevin's account of Mancon 5 makes me realize, all over again, that I missed a truly great convention and I'm sorry I couldn't have been there. If Kuttner & Moore's "Vintage Season" ever comes to pass, be assured that in the future hordes of fans from both sides of the Atlantic will come flocking to that Mancon eager to participate in a high good time. The more reports that are published, the more we keenly realize what was lost to us. With the advent of time travel, hundreds of fans will troop back through history reliving the great moments: the Exclusion Act of 1939, Weak-eyes Korshak shooting up and down the tables in 1952, Gertrude Carr being thrown into the pool in 1955, the same getting her head caught in the elevator doors in 1962, and of course the exciting programming and gourmet dinners of Mancon 5.

One reason why fans (me among them) seldom leave the con hotel is that the city outside is less than pleasurable, probably because we live there. I go to Chicago only to attend a con, and go outside the hotel only for exotic dinners or to visit a friend's home. Only madmen and tourists wander the Chicago streets. But far away from home, ah ... I roamed the streets of Sydney, Melbourne, St. Kilda, and Falconbridge with open delight, and was in danger only once when a kangaroo accosted me in an alley.

((Hope you weren't too roo'd.))

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Kevin Williams' piece gave me a somewhat different view of Mancon than the others I've read. It also increased my vocabulary by employing such words as oleaginous, accretion, and bar. A nice little account that would have benefitted from a bit more detail and expansion on some items.

Robin Johnson's and Harry Turner's pieces both made my mind think of political thoughts, though different ones. I am almost tempted to reply to Robin by going into the American domination of Micronesia in some great detail, stressing how the U.S. Congress passed legislation to make the Marianas Islands a U.S. Commonwealth, but an article on American expansionism and



colonialism would probably bore me as much as it would your readers. Not your average fanzine fare, these items.

Rob Jackson's article was pretty weak. Almost everyone has flown in a commercial airliner in this day and age so his sense of wonder reporting didn't really succeed (with me). The article never really seemed to reach a true conclusion and left me with an unfulfilled feeling. ("Just what makes you feel fulfilled, Hughes?"). Rob is a much stronger writer than this piece would suggest.

((I think you may be over-stating the case when you say "almost everyone has flown". I haven't, and I suspect that less than 50% of Gannetfandom has flown. Not much in the way of internal flying for us poor Englishmen, you see, so unless you go on a package holiday flight, you're unlikely to have flown))

Dave Rowe	Kev's trouble is what
8 Park Drive	should be his strength,
Wickford	to wit: his similes.
Essex	Great little one-liners
SS12 9DH	but strung together
	they become far too

'heavy', one can imagine Kev hunched over his writing desk, his sweat covered brow frowning above knitted eyebrows, his eyes on fire with a demonic light as he labours on the next 'hilarious' exaggeration, whilst totally forgetting flow and plot.

By contrast, Harry Turner's use of the straight quote, the quiet observation and 'innocent' understatement produced a superior and more jovial narrative.

The only 'quality' which stood Tocsin apart from the present bland & banal monotony of British fnzs, was (excluding it's discussion on 'Art' Gasp!) its consistant 'datedness'. Kevin on Apr '76 (Reject from Maya? ((No))), Robin on July '76 (culled from loc ((No))), Harry on March '37 (50% culled from Newspapers), Rob on Aug '73 (reject from Blunt!?! ((and Lurk))), and a nigh-on year old local culled from Grialing BOSCH. Tocsin had character .... the character of the local aged drunk, half asleep at the bar, having forgotten which decade he's in, emitting random muddled memories in an amiable, if unengrossing, atmosphere. (and I complained about Kevin's similes)

((As well as knitted eyebrows, Kevin has crocheted himself a nice moustache, and is willing to do you a new beard in a wool and polyester mixture.))





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Rob's mention of terrorists (airport variety) sparks off memories of flights out to see my parents in Munich when the school holidays came around. I flew back from one summer holiday the very day after Leila Khaled and her team had tried to hijack an El Al 747 out of Frankfurt for London. The result of that was an absolute wave of police

and security guards descending upon every German airport, stalking about the lounges with the flaps of their holsters tied back and ugly looks on their faces, as though they were almost willing someone to produce a bomb just so that they could get in a little target practice before clocking-off time. The immediate security precautions applied to the passengers were ridiculous; although it was probably the first time that anyone had ever actually looked at anyone's cabin baggage, the German customs weren't satisfied until they had tipped out the entire contents of even the smallest handbag, examining tubes of lipstick with something akin to fearful awe. Passengers were then bussed out to the airplane in groups of ten at a time, with two security guards riding with them - one at the back, one at the front - where they then had to identify their hold baggage before it was loaded and, depending upon its size, shape and weight, open it on the tarmac for a customs man to go through for a second time.

I imagine Munich managed to fly no more than half its scheduled departures that day, so far behind did they fall.

Ray Harrison talks about the Barrier "that exists due to the need to do something in order to remain on the fannish treadmill. But he's overlooking the one area where there's no need to do anything to receive a lithoed fanzine every other month,. What else but the BSFA? Most of their members must be paralysed as far as letter-writing is concerned; the most they need do is send off a cheque every twelve months in order to keep on receiving Vector, which supplies them with all the tedious sercon nonsense that they'll ever need. Or ever want; few of them demonstrate the motivation necessary to get involved in the fannish side of things, and the few that do are fannish fans already.

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The great fannish tradition is not just place dropping, but restaurant-dropping. The trick is to project the feeling that you are so totally familiar with a given city that you don't even bother mentioning the sights; all you care about is jetting halfway round the world for a superb curry,. Thus, I can casually drop into the conversation, "Oh, but the best seafood place I know of is in Sidney -- remember, John, where the black cat comes to the window beside your table and asks for scraps?" or "I know a great Italian restaurant, in King's Cross, Sidney." Eli can really get off on talking about his favourite Chinese restaurants -- the one in Heidelberg, the one in Swift Current, Saskatchewan...

I remember Kansas City. I had the worst steak I'd ever eaten, or tried to eat, in the Muelbach dining room. Except the one the next night was even worse.



The other fannish game, of course, is to drop references to cons you never attended. I can tell stories about sliding down the laundry chutes at the Claremont with the best of them... and remember the banquet, with Phil Farmer going on and on, and those damned pillars in the way, and... and of course, I never went to the Baycon, but I've heard all the stories, so they're part of "my" fan history. Eli can tell great Aussiecon stories. It's family history.

Rob Jackson's flying piece brings back memories. I still have a goshwow Sense of Wonder feeling about flying (big bird in sky, flappa-flappa, wheeccc!) but the magic is mitigated by the mundanity of most airlines. Plastic packets of salt, yes. What I remember most clearly about the Aussiecon flight was not the wonder of dawn over the Pacific, but the banality of sitting in what appeared to be a large, dark bus terminal, full of rows and rows of somnolent fen, with the only sound the tapping of L'Elver Grey's typewriter as somebody worked on a one-shot: all at umpteen thousand feet over the Pacific. That, and getting woken up every four hours by the flight crew distributing plastic cups of orange juice. I wonder if there's some regulation on the books that "Tourists entering Australia must have a valid visa, and at least 500 mg of vitamin C in their bodies"?

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I found your musings on why the title of your fnz was changed bitter-sweet. A lot of truth in what you say, old bean. Of late I've been thinking of doing a fnz again. I had thus come to the same conclusion as you, that it would need a new title and for similar reasons. Not that I can't 'go back'; remarkably most of the contributors to Crabapple are still in touch with me (several of them have re-surfaced in the past year, which is about the only good thing one can say for immigration!), but I think that they would be writing differently now, for reasons you outlined in your editorial.

By a coincidence, if coincidences there be, my mother sent a letter today in which she enclosed three photos from her collection for me to keep; one of them was the one taken in Gateshead with you and Rich Gordon and me, that Christmas some - what - must be ten or eleven years ago now. The house in which it was taken has gone; I went round to see it in Gateshead last Easter ((1976)), and there was just a flat razed piece of land. It was incredible how, with just that flatness, there was no way of orienting oneself and thus being able to point out where it stood. No wonder folk go round and round when lost in the desert (or isn't it because they go round and round in the direction - ie right or left - dictated by whether or not their right leg or left leg is the shorter? ie if it's the left, they go left, and so on).

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You're right, of course, we can't go back, not that we should feel the need really. Nostalgic reminiscing about old times is pleasant enough, but not to the extent of actually wanting to return. One changes... I wouldn't put out now the Les Spinges I did ten years ago (there's a lot more excellent genzines now than there were then anyway, so people would be more harsh on a crudzine like LS was).

Rob Jackson's experiences of plane travel strike some chords; I enjoy watching the clouds drift by too. I reckon the khazi must empty into a tank, though, which they flush out at the destination. Remember the deep space one in '2001'? With the arm-length list of instructions? Not only is the food inedible, but the stewardesses on jet planes are plastic too. I think they're some sort of robot, and have their smiles carefully fixed into place before the journey and hardened with a quick-drying spray coating before they go out to meet the customers. The only way to survive is to take your own food, I think; must try it next time. When we went to the U.S. last October ((1976)) we flew by Laker, which is about the lowest you can sink to, and the food really was putrescent. However the film was free...

Harry Turner has an interesting bit on paleo-rocketry. When I was a lad there was a group of people at my school who were interested in the propellant abilities of chlorate and sugar. What they did was bury an old iron drainpipe about three feet long, vertically in the ground. They half filled it with the explosive mixture, with a fuse, and then filled up the rest of the pipe with gravel. Then they lit the fuse and ran like hell (it was fortunately on a quite large piece of scrubby waste land). Those chips of gravel came out like bullets, and every tree and bush within half a mile was pitted with the impact marks. The bang broke quite a lot of windows too (nowadays we'd just shrug, I suppose, and blame it on Concorde). The police never found out who did it, though there were those who could have told them. Nobody was killed, either, which was very fortunate. The chief instigator of the enterprise later went on to better things, like stealing explosives from the Dinorwic Quarry one January and blowing one corner off the Snowdon Summit Hotel (it was closed for the winter, and deserted, of course). Last I heard he was doing porridge for receiving...

((My schoolmates were less scientific in their approach, preferring simply to stuff rolls of old photographic film down the barrel of a miniature brass cannon someone had made in metalwork. When lit the film quickly exploded from the mouth of the cannon and the sight of this magnificent fireball flying across the yard was all we needed - we never even considered using the film as propulsion for something else. Boyish interests pass soon enough, and our experiments with explosives soon gave way to the more unsavoury practice of lowering bottles of school milk down the drains on long pieces of string, then drawing them up again several months later and throwing the contents at one another. We also ground glass, but that's another story... ))

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Harry Turner's piece on the early days of Mancunian Rocketry was interesting, particularly so because it tends to disprove the theory put forward by many sf authors that on planets where the sky is never seen the inhabitants will not develop space-travel. I have it on good authority that during the time Harry

was talking about, smog was pretty dense in the Manchester area.... it just shows that if you have a cosmic mind, mere details such as not being able to see the heavens are irrelevant. Or was this why their rockets only reached 20 feet.... did they think that above that height started outer space!?!



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Your editorial came at just the wrong time for me. I've been pondering over the transitory nature of the things I encounter and the phenomenal high rate of accomplishment which I seem to attain in somehow causing anything I like particularly to suffer a great sea change almost at once. So you write about this very phenomenon and I was left feeling worse than ever. For

instance, I can't even decide if I've held the same job for the past 34 years, as I've assumed all along. Today I was surveying the situation. Out of all the employees on the payroll when I went to work at the newspaper factory, only two remain on the job today. The ownership has undergone a 100 per cent change. The building and its contents are almost entirely new or unrecognizably altered (one stairway, a couple of walls, an old set of scales and a couple of filing cabinets are the only things that survive from the first day I reported on the job, since everything else has been replaced or altered and renovated beyond comprehension). The contents of the newspapers have shifted wildly, abandoning almost all forms of local news coverage except politics and high school sports, substituting "investigative" and "analytical" reporting for straightforward coverage of national and international events. It's something like the old science-fiction question of whether an individual is still the same person after having most of his anatomy transplanted, amputated, and otherwise changed.

Kevin's conreport is uncomfortably similar to quite a few others I've been reading and hearing about numerous cons, both here and over the bright blue sea. Either con committees are deteriorating or some fans are losing their sense of wonder at cons. I suppose the dissatisfaction shown by various fans at specific cons comes from various circumstances: so many cons that they're no longer the novelty they once were, so many fans at some cons that the individual feels alienated, and the general decline in mundane facilities for any kind of large gathering as salaries go higher and buildings get older.

Rob Jackson is a bolder man in airplanes than I am. I didn't fly at all until six years ago when I went to the Noreascon in Boston. There were levers and buttons and so on within reach at my seat, but I was too timid to manipulate any of them. I wasn't positive that I understood their function, and I kept thinking how awful it would be if I inadvertently should pull the emergency cord and the plane screeched to a dead stop at a time when the passengers had their safety belts unhooked. Or what if I mistook a personal convenience for a button which turned on the plane's headlights and an oncoming plane's pilot should be blinded by my stupidity? So I didn't dare touch anything, not even a stewardess.

Harry Turner's memories were amusing. It's extraordinary, how safe and tidy anything which happened in 1937 or thereabouts seems when described in retrospect. The world knew another awful war was imminent, the Depression was still affecting many nations, and yet in 1977 those of us who personally experienced the anxieties and problems which 1937 was beset with still find ourselves thinking longingly of such a year in retrospect.

I'm virtually unique among fans, in that I don't find a great deal of enjoyment in art shows at cons. Yet I think I get just as impressed and happy about good art in fanzines or prozines as anyone else. I'd always felt that this anomaly was somehow linked to my inability to enjoy zoos: a feeling that the artworks shouldn't be held captive on the walls of a room but should be allowed to roam freely over the land on the pages of prozines and fanzines. But the discussion in your letter section gives me new doubts about my reaction. Maybe Harry Turner is right when he blames the commercial slant of most art shown at these events; I might subconsciously expect museum-type art when I see pictures on the walls. Maybe Eddie Jones is correct in what he says about the need for proper display, and my reaction is influenced by the fearful jumble of too many illustrations in very limited space which has existed at every con art show I've ever seen. In any event, I do think some attention is needed to definitions where fan art is concerned. It seems foolish to refer to someone as an amateur when he regularly earns substantial amounts from commissions from other fans and from sales at cons which may equal the per-picture income that a "commercial" artist would get from selling to the lower-paying publications.

((No-one at British cons has really been in that position, which is one of the things which disturbs me; there appear to be no artists exhibiting at British con artshows, who have created their drawings or paintings with the sole intention of selling it as a one-off; they all seem to be trying to catch the eye of a publisher or two. Except for D. West, of course, who, with the help of Rob Jackson's purchasing power, is hoping to become a full-time con artshow artist. And all he has to pay for is someone to bid against Jackson in the auction.))

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You are so right in describing your personal version of "You can't go back again." There's a magic about some places, some moments, often the result of rose-coloured nostalgia, which cannot be duplicated. And shouldn't be recaptured. It is better to preserve such precious memories intact than have them destroyed by the changes

that are inevitable with the passage of time. People, places, ambiances, even fanzines change along with the rest of us. And many memories are better left undisturbed by the often harsh lights of the present.

I guess I've become rather blasé about air travel over the years. I no longer request a seat that'll give me a good view, being more interested in one that'll put me closer to the bar during flight-time and nearer the exit when we land. But the one thing that has not changed over the years is my determination to do my best to approach getting my money's worth from the airlines! I eat every meal they serve, and have chastised fellow fans such as Tucker for turning down the third free meal in eight hours. At the very least one should accept the tray, pocket the neat little wrapped packages of utensils and condiments, preserve any edibles that are capable of being stored for later, and hand over any other foodstuffs to the always-hungry people who are inevitably around. And always ask for a deck of cards and some writing materials since most airlines carry them for discerning passengers. My apartment is filled with eighty dollar cards and seventy dollar airline envelopes! It's our duty as fans to make the absolute most of these exorbitantly overpriced inconveniences



which stand between us and conventions.

Interesting contrast between Harry Turner and Eddie Jones with the former rating art shows according to how well they display the artwork and the latter seeming to consider the prices art will bring as the most important aspect of a con art display. I suppose that's the difference between the true amateur sf artist like Harry and the professional such as Eddie. I've observed that the pro artists price their work according to what the market will bear, and I guess that's perfectly understandable. Eddie's minimums in the U.S. are much higher than his prices for similar paintings displayed at English cons, and the cost of a Kelly Peas rough at Aussiecon -- probably the only time most Australians would ever have to buy even a crude Peas -- was simply beyond reach even for most attending U.S. fans. Can't blame the artists, though; most of them are in the field for financial reasons (as well as their enthusiasm for the subject matter) and it'd be unrealistic to expect them not to strive for the best possible deals. When you get down to it, of course, prices for so-called "fan" art -- much of which is on a par with the very best of professional work -- are ludicrous compared to what work brings outside the field. Well-meaning fans offer Derek Carter perhaps one fifth or less of the very minimum he'd charge for a commercial job and think they're being generous: fans tend to completely lack any reasonable understanding of what artwork is worth, which is why we see full-colour cover paintings selling for ridiculously low two digit amounts. I'd like to see fan-artists start to get prices comparable to commercial rates for artists, even though that would mean I'd be incapable of buying even the small amount of sf art I still occasionally manage to pick up nowadays.

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I'm a bit confused as to what Harry Turner is arguing for or against in his letter. Perhaps it would help to be taken through a gallery and shown what is meant as "commercial" and "non-commercial" sf art. The term "non-commercial" makes me think of introspective, idiosyncratic art that conveys nothing to the average viewer at first glance. Or maybe it means working in mediums besides pen-and-ink or oils. I've seen a couple of interesting objects made from colored threads wound around a design of pins pushed into a cork board. And my very good friend Neicer has recently finished a hooked rug based on an illustration by Phil Foglio.

((.....))

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Although I wouldn't profess any great knowledge of the arts it seems pretty obvious to me that con art shows at present are peculiarly limited in scope when compared to the infinitely wider mundane field. Where are the sf impressionists? The sculptors? When did you last see a kinetic in a con art show? A few years back, when I was into the art side of conventions I was engaged for several months in a painting which I hoped would be new to con art shows. It involved fibre optics and tape recorders together with a whole lot of electronics - the idea being to animate the painting as much as possible, to make it actually respond to

the presence of a viewer, using heat sensors. It was probably too ambitious for me at the time, but I'd like to have another go at it sometime. There's just no experimentation in present sf art.

I was never as ambitious in rocket-building programme as was Harry Turner. I always dreamed that someday I would build a rocket fuelled by (gasp) gunpowder, but it was sadly never to be - the nearest I got was the development of an inch long cylinder containing cannibalised match-heads which had the terrific range of about five feet. I say 'about' five feet because my quality control was moderately abysmal at the time and could probably be approximates as plus or minus two feet or so. Later on I modified the design to exclude the bits of wood stuck in the match head (it impaired the burning qualities of the phosphorus) and thereby managed to increase the range to living room proportions. I don't think any event in the real space programme has quite equalled the tension generated whilst waiting for those tin-foil rockets to hurtle themselves away from the gas fire.

I sympathise with Eddie Jones's complaint of lack of incentive at British art shows but I find rather strange his assumption that an artist should make enough money there to cover his cost of attending the convention. He says that "Like most fans, I go to a convention to relax, enjoy the company of friends, and to party." But later; "...although lots of people complimented him ((Blair Wilkins)) on his work, his sales hardly paid his expenses. One cannot eat compliments." It seems to me that this is an unfortunate attitude with which to approach a convention - especially if you admit you like to enjoy yourself whilst you are there. The ordinary fan afterwards, has no way of "paying his expenses" except by using his own cash.

((On the nose, Sunbeam. And I'd like to see that "animated" painting of yours one day.))

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In general, I thoroughly agree with Eddie's comments... art shows are badly organised in the UK...and the Mancon two-bit show was poorly sited...and the auction time abysmally chosen (concurrent with another item if I recall). On the other hand, my heartfelt thanks went

to (a) the people who spent a lot of their precious con time setting up the artshow...I forget who it was now, but I do recall writing the chief organiser a letter of thanks for his hard work. (b) my thanks to the people who handled the mini-auction, they too worked hard in keeping tabs of everything. Between (a) and (b) Mancon took a lot of work off the artists...and because of this, I don't begrudge them the 10% they took off the top. I do begrudge whoever set the show in a separate building, in two rooms and whoever programmed another item at the same time.

As to Harry Turner's comment...completely valid from his point of view, i.e. he wants experiments off the normal' sf art. Fair enough, and if anyone wants to do that ground breaking, more power to their elbow...but please, don't for those who like doing spaceships, robots and the more standard stuff. We like to do it...stereotyped or not...and those who buy it must like it too...so we are satisfied. By all means let's have other media and styles in the art show ...but let's not imply that the 'standard' (for want of a better word) is passe, old hat or just not wanted. Live and let live huh?

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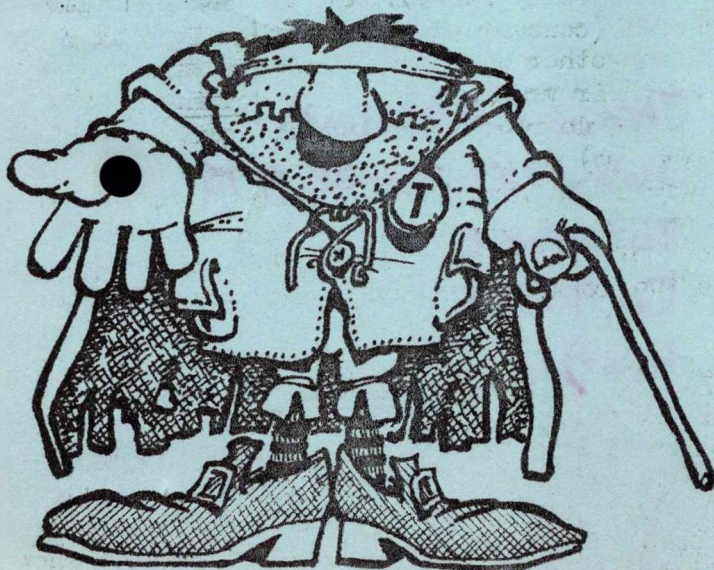
I went to Madeira and the Canary Islands this year, instead of to the Eastercon. And I went by boat. After reading Bob's piece I guess I'll go by sea rather than air whenever I can. Cruising is so much more civilised a form of travel. For me, one of the great things about the holiday was a fortnight of insulation from all the usual pressures of life: no newspapers, no

radio, no telly, no news; no commitments, no demands on my time, no deadlines to be met. Just relaxation all the way. Expensive perhaps, but well worth it. Nothing to do but laze around in the sun, find quiet corners to get on with drawings undisturbed, and eat... the menus were out of this world, and there was a help-yourself table at every meal that provided so many alternatives that I never got around to sampling them all. Who wants a plastic meal on a plane, cooped up in a seat? One of these years there ought to be a Cruisecon... but we'll need lots of warning if we're to save up for it.

Eddie comes on like a real tradesman. We obviously differ in that while we both use our talents commercially to earn a living he has a "higher" view of his work as "art". Me, I just see it as part of a system of persuasion and visual communication that I despise; such work is ephemeral, a visual packaging to sell a product. Fortunately from my viewpoint I have become more the administrator, delegating work in the studio, and leaving me free to devote my energies to areas I consider worthwhile. Eddie, I suspect, may be in danger of digging so deep a rut for himself that he'll never get out and be himself away from commercial pressures. I think you ought to warn any young hopefuls of that Great Trap.

(Am I being controversial again?)

((Uhuh. But it's interesting to note that in an interview in Vortex, Eddie said: "I'd like to do more Fine art, gallery work and 'real' painting. But I think I'll always be doing what I'm doing now." and "I get no satisfaction from seeing my picture on a paperback cover. I get more satisfaction out of the cheque."))



.....

Actually, I quite like Eddie's work and must apologise to him if the argument seems to be directed at him personally -- I'm far more perturbed at his imitators. And now, a quick word about Blind Pugh to the left there -- if he's got a Black Spot for you, you better respond to this issue or Long John'll cut yer liver out. Or maybe I just won't send you the next issue. Quake in your shoes, mateys.



Time for something of a logo, I guess, before I finish this off and have to start looking for money to mail it out.

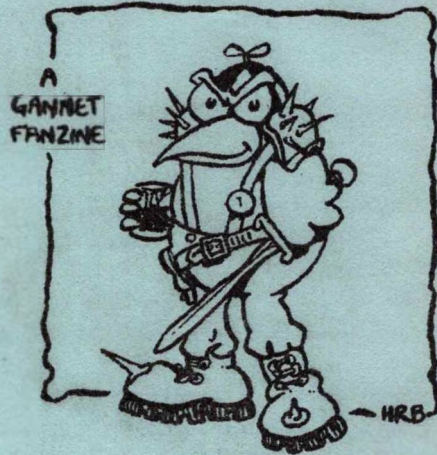
I tell you what, let's just settle for that elaborate design at the bottom of the page, shall we, simply adding that this is Grimwab Publication 12, duplicated on Inca Press, with some assistance from Dave Cockfield.

Available solely by Whim, but often as not being sent to faneds who send me fanzines I like.

This last stencil dated 5th March 1978 which is, I trust, in a year which will be a Good One.

Next issue will be RealSoonNow. No, really.

"Beware, my child, the rhubarb tree;  
Its claws so long, its teeth so dark  
Will leave you with a dreadful mark;  
And if you fall into its clutches  
You will raise a scream, such as,  
'Eeeeeeeaaaaaaaauuurrrrghh!'"



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